

**Appropriations Committee
Public Hearing February 15, 2017**

**Testimony of Jonathan Lis
UConn School of Medicine, 3rd Year Student**

Re: UConn Health Budget

Good Afternoon,

Co-Chairs, Ranking Members, and members of the Committee, thank you for giving audience to this crucial issue of future funding. My name is Jonathan Lis, and I am a third-year medical student at UConn. I'm a proud life-long resident of West Hartford, and I plan on staying in Connecticut to serve the state as a physician.

First, allow me to express my sincere gratitude for the support you have already given UConn Health. We have a truly impressive campus, which is home to even more impressive clinicians and innovative science. We have active and bright students, approximately 80% of whom are Connecticut residents when they begin medical school, who attend the medical school not only because it is the most logical financial option but because they are proud to call Connecticut their home. Initiatives and programs like Bioscience CT, CT AHEC Program, and Connecticut Institution for Primary Care Innovation, as I spoke about in previous testimony, have allowed us to headline national academic conferences, speak face-to-face with our U.S. senators and representatives in Washington, and completely revitalize our curriculum to the cutting edge of pedagogy. Like our state, our medical school is small, powerful, fiercely proud, and extremely hard-working. Thank you for helping us to achieve success thus far.

Second, we have a serious problem to solve together, evidenced by an anticipated budget deficit of \$1.5 billion this year. Any proposal that would make steep cuts to UConn Health for the upcoming fiscal year may save the state money in the short-term. In the long-term however, such a plan would be highly detrimental, and potentially even lethal, to our state. A financially strong and well-supported UConn Health will inevitably, directly, and uniquely lead to a healthier population and workforce, more jobs for our citizens, and a higher quality of life. Each of these will in turn lead to an increase in state GDP and a stronger state economy. These basic concepts have been repeatedly proven in both the economic and medical literature.

Therefore, now is clearly the time for bold, intelligent, and unrelenting support of UConn Health.

We cannot swim against the current forever. We have innovated and managed despite sparse resources, but our most talented individuals are becoming disheartened and jaded by the constant and very real threat of increasing tuition and decreasing state support. If we continue along the current path, I guarantee that even people like me will have no choice but to leave the state. You have the unique power to change the direction of the current. Let us come together and take action for the benefit of our state.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jonathan B. Lis
M.D. Candidate, Class of 2018
University of Connecticut School of Medicine